DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 227 HE 027 192

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TITLE One World: Two Spheres. International Majors at William Woods College.
PUB DATE 10 Mar 93
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (12th, Ypsilanti, MI, April 1-3, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Administration Education; Cultural Awareness; *Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; Faculty Development; Futures (of Society); *Global Approach; Higher Education; *International Studies; Liberal Arts; Second Language Learning
IDENTIFIERS William Woods College MO

ABSTRACT

A globally responsive education is needed to prepare students to work and live in the 21st century. A combination of knowledge of languages, cultures, and business will enable individuals to successfully work with others and better understand and respect the diversity of world cultures. University education should provide a balance between the transient interests of a particular society and time in history (the professional aspect) and the enduring truths of civilizations (the liberal arts, the humanities). International education must be committed to making all students more knowledgeable about the world and business management as it is practiced in a global context. The only way to accomplish this objective is through a core curriculum or general education requirements that will "touch" every student. Courses in world civilization, American foreign relations, and area studies help students acquire an international perspective which will in turn help them better understand their own country. Minimal proficiency in foreign language and cultures and some basic knowledge in international business should also be required. Students should be encouraged to spend at least a semester abroad. An affiliation should be developed with an institution of higher education in a foreign country, for the exchange of students and faculty. Faculty development is also essential. (Contains 20 references.) (JDD)

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March 10, 1993

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Twelfth Annual EMU Conference on

Language and Communication for World Business and the Professions

April 1 - 3, 1993

Ypsilanti, Michigan

INTERNATIONALIZING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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One World: Two Spheres

International Majors at William Woods College

The world, as we know it, is slowly fading away and a new global community is taking its shape. In the very near future, we will no longer be faced with problems that concern only United States, but the world at large. We must change our attitudes toward other peoples, acquire knowledge of other cultures, learn how to conduct business in a world of diversity, and drop or prejudices and traditional and stereotyped views of the rest of the world. How can we achieve this goal? The answer is simple: through education, an education that is globally responsive and will prepare our students to work and live in the twenty-first century. William Fulbright, a distinguished American statesman, wisely said that "education is a slow-moving but powerful force. It may not be fast enough or strong enough to save us from catastrophe, but it is the strongest force available." [1] And speaking of educators, Coleridge put it well when he said that it is our mission to keep alive the past, in the present, for the future."

International education is especially critical today, at the time when we need to have a greater understanding of international issues and the potential repercussions of our actions on the rest

of the world. We need to learn how other people think, how they react and how they perceive our views and actions. It may be true that foreigners do speak our language, but the fact remains that the most useful language in the business world, says Paul Simon, is the language of the client and it may not be English. Today, foreigners are no longer obliged to buy our products. They can buy them elsewhere, if they don't like our attitude. If they buy them from us, it is because it is to their advantage.[2] Thus, the combination of languages, cultures and business will enable us to successfully work with others and better understand and respect the diversity of cultures that define the world at large and our own society. One body of knowledge will teach us how to think, analyze and solve problems while the other will enable us to put our knowledge into practice.

In the last few years our university education has come to be regarded merely as a professional preparation for the job market. Unfortunately, career oriented studies alone provide limited solutions to the problems we face. There must be a balance between the transient interests of a particular society and time in history (the professional aspect) and the enduring truths of civilizations (the liberal arts, the humanities). Liberal education, said Humphrey Tonkin, "transcends the particular limitations of time and space and teaches us the universals of human conduct. Today, in our fragile world, this is not merely a desirable goal: it is an

imperative."[3] In the first century B.C., Cicero said that when the best in us is enhanced by the study of history and civilization, we surpass those that lack such knowledge, because we are, in essence, more fully human.[4] It has been said that one changes jobs at least three times, often seven times in a lifetime. Consequently, we must offer an education that will best prepare our young generation for these changes, an education that is relevant for all times, because "true" relevance, according to John Sawhill, is that which affords learners "to grow emotionally and intellectually."[5]

The International Studies are designed to bridge the gap between business and the academic world, the present and the future, the world of today as we know it and the world of tomorrow as our students will know it. We need professionals with a world view that will enable them to successfully work and compete in an international arena and be at ease in the cultural setting in the country of their prospective clients, we need individuals with good communication, and problem-solving skills, and expertise in different cultures; in short, we need people whose past experiences have been simmered in liberal arts education, designed to inform the mind, while training them for a profession and a good life. Alexander the Great of Macedonia used to say that while his parents gave him the gift of life it was his teacher Aristotle who gave him the gift of the <u>good</u> life. [6]

It is important then for us to remember that we are no longer citizens of the United States, Europe, or Japan, but citizens of the world, of HUMANITY. Henry Peyre said that we need "to open more windows on the world."[7] We, as educators, have the power and the means to just do that. We have the responsibility too to expose our students to the international aspect of education so that they will be better able to cope with the problems of the twenty-first century, be more responsive to the needs and dreams of a new kind of society that will offer new challenges and call for new solutions. "The economic, diplomatic, social, cultural, scientific and military challenges to human survival in the twenty-first century and beyond," said Geoffrey M Voght, "will require a pooling of resources and expertise that is only possible with foreign language and international studies as an essential foundation." [8]

Interdisciplinary in nature, international studies majors are intended for students who are planning a career in government, diplomatic service, international business or other internationally-orientated professions or graduate and professional studies. In general, however, they aim at preparing all students for the new challenges in the increasingly inter-dependent world of tomorrow, giving them an international perspective and a better understanding of international issues. Jim Sylvester said that global education is essential "as a means to prepare students to

live in the 'global village' of the twenty-first century."[9] And, an essential part of this global education is the cultural aspect that is evident even in the most routine-like situations, like, for instance, a mother reprimanding a child. The English-speaking mother says: "Be good;" the French mother says: "Be wise;" the German mother says: "Get in line;" while the Indian mother says: "That's not the Indian way." Or the most common words in the English language, like "sweetheart." In French it is "petit chou" (small cabbage), in Italian "tesoro mio"... anima mia, pupilla mia, and so on. How do we translate, for instance, "hot dogs?"

International Studies can no longer be separated from the rest of professions. They have to be a part, an integral part of the curriculum and no student should be exempt from learning about the many cultures in our world society. We need professionals who can conduct business without the aid of interpreters, scientists who can share their knowledge with the rest of the world, and educated citizens with the world view who can enter the international marketplace successfully. We need businessmen who will be at ease in the cultural setting of the country of their perspective customers and we need professionals (business executives, corporation lawyers, accountants and engineers,...) who are well-trained professionally but are also culturally literate, and able to handle language at the level of minimum professional proficiency. "It is inconceivable that Mr. American Businessman,"

said Andre Crispin,"often must put his faith in the native bilingual chauffeur or taxi driver."[10]

International education, if it is to be successful, cannot be limited only to a one or two internationally-oriented components, like a foreign language requirement, or study-abroad programs; such a program would only benefit a select number of individuals. Rather, it must be committed to making all students more knowledgeable about the world and the present business management as it is practiced in a global context. They all must have a sound knowledge and understanding of the international environment in which governments, international organizations and private institutions conduct their international activities. Edward Hollander, Chancellor of Higher Education for the state of New Jersey, said that "globalization of education should no longer be on the fringe of the curriculum, 'the frosting on the cake.' Rather, it must be an integral part of the curriculum. And no student should be exempted from learning about the many cultures in our world society."[11]

The only way to really accomplish this objective is through a core curriculum or general education requirements that will "touch" every student. Mark Twain put it so well, when he said that It is the mission of the educators to turn a "cabbage," an

incoming freshman, into a "cauliflower," by the time he or she graduates.

International education, furthermore, implies bringing down all the boundaries (geographic, historical, cultural and social) between different nations and thus allowing the free exchange of ideas, goals and aspirations that will eventually lead to a new world order, where every individual could pursue his individual freedoms and thus become a responsible citizen of the world community. It can, in fact, be traced back to ancient times, though the term itself "international" did not exist as yet. Internationalization is in fact grounded in the very idea of a university which is universal in scope and purpose. Alexander the Great, for instance, established universities and libraries throughout his empire. In the thirteenth century, universities prospered in Italy, France and England and curriculum models were set up at the university of Bologna, Paris and Oxford, and so did study abroad programs. United States played a leading role only after World War II, but it was in the form of assistance and short-term service. In 1979, the interest in international studies was revived with Carter's Commission of Foreign Language and International Studies which made it very clear that we are indeed illiterate when it comes to understanding world affairs and cultures. Finally, in 1991, the Congress passed the National

Security Education Act which provides 1) scholarships for undergraduate study abroad, 2) grants to colleges and universities for international and area studies and 3) graduate fellowships.

Internationalization of campuses varies from a very limited involvement, having only one or two internationally oriented components, to a full commitment to international education, offering among other programs specific international majors.

There are several options in the field of international studies. A student my want to major in International Studies, in Business and Foreign Language, or Marketing and Foreign Language. The key is to combine the study of foreign languages, business, history, political science, religion and social sciences and thus develop communicative skills, cultural understanding, business language and possibly experience abroad.

In the study of foreign languages, the emphasis should be on communicative skills, western and non-western culture and language for business or business-oriented courses for special groups, like social workers, medical and paramedical personnel, businessmen, journalists,... maybe a course in Spanish for social and health services, French for law and commerce, Italian for singers, German for marketing, Russian for travel and Japanese for business. In Japan, for instance, business people study the language, the

customs and culture of the nations they deal with. They believe that by neglecting such a study they loose the competitive edge in the world market. In Japan, says Mariko Tashiro, they often say that "when America sneezes, Japan catches a cold." [12] We, on the other hand, lack expertise in almost every area that is international in nature and scope. "We know," said Gerald Baliles, governor of Virginia and chairman of the National Governor's Association, "neither the language, the cultures, nor the geopraphic characteristics of our competitors." Its time to change.

Like it or not, we must prepare our students for the future by exposing them to the international dimension. "Solid training in any of the functional fields of study in the business school should be understood to include the international dimension in that field."[13] And what would be more relevant to a business major than a course in international business, international finance, international banking or international marketing? Students' chances for a job would only be enhanced by such a background. Let's face it! Today, doing business in the United States means doing business with the rest of the world, because the entire economic structure at home and abroad is changing. According to Miriam Kazanjian, Director of the Task Force on Global Business Competence, "a bordless, global economy is evolving. New markets are opening up for American firms, but profits are not going to

accrue automatically. Firms have to develop into global enterprises and to do that international competence will be a key factor." James Knott echoed this idea by saying that the international arena is an arena of activity for growing numbers of businessmen, lawyers, scholars, scientists, journalists, consultants, research specialists, and civil servants outside the traditional foreign policy machinery."[14]

Courses in world civilization, American Foreign Relations, Modern Africa, Middle East, China, Japan, to name but a few, will go a long way toward helping students to acquire an international perspective which will in turn help them better understand their own country. Students need to internationalize their thinking and know how their own lives have been enriched by foreign inventions and contributions.

Regardless of their major, students should be encouraged to spend at least a semester abroad. There is no better learning experience than that of the "total immersion" in the language and culture of the target country and no better opportunity for intellectual growth and world understanding. "Junior year abroad" was as popular among the Romans as it is today in our society. Even the method they used was very much like the proficiency method we ourselves use today. Mark Twain correctly said that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow mindedness and many of our

people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome charitable views of men cannot be acquired by vegetating in our little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." Last year, to quote Senator Boren, "only 42,000 of our college undergraduates studied for a semester or more overseas, while 356,000 foreign college undergraduates came to the United States, to learn about us."[15]

An internship will furthermore give students the experience that will get them a job later on, perhaps a better job because of that. United Nations, for instance, is always interested in individuals who have knowledge in economics, economic development, area studies (Middle East, China,..), languages, developing areas, social studies or youth programs. Internships are also available in banking, business, communication, and so on.

To have a successful international program, a sister-type affiliation should be developed, thus offering all students (Foreign and American) an insight into a new culture. As a direct result of the gained familiarity with the host country's cultural, historical, economic and social heritage, students will be more sensitive to differing political and cultural objectives of foreign countries. At the same time, foreign students will contribute "to the intellectual strength and international perspective of American campuses, enhance institutional income, and become globally

inclined individuals who will increase the prospects for world peace."[16] We can export our students abroad with a minimum change of educational environment or cost, and we can import students who are very much interested in our education and our way of life, and intellectually motivated. Thus, they contribute immensely to our curriculum and are instrumental in internationalizing our campuses. In addition, it has been our experience that institutions with whom we affiliate, wish to exchange not only students but faculty as well. There is perhaps the greatest resource and reward possible.

Any revision of the existing curriculum of course requires the enthusiastic support of the faculty and administration. Faculty development becomes essential and can be easily achieved and with little effort if the mission of the college or university is to internationalize the entire campus. If there is a large turn-over of the faculty, it is very easy to replace the retiring faculty with an internationally-orientated faculty member. If not, then there must be a opportunity for the faculty to spend some time abroad through grants, fellowships or work abroad.

"In the future," said William Voris, president of the American Graduate School of International Management in Phoenix, Arizona, "we will have to live in a monastery to avoid contact with foreign cultures." [17] There is no doubt that international studies will in addition bring about a better understanding of the differences that

exist within our own society and that American ways are not the only ways in which individual needs are dealt with. So far we have failed our international proficiency exam, "because we, as Americans, have forgotten our heritage, the source of our strength. We are all foreigners here;... We have forgotten that a rainbow coalition made this country." [18]

Therefore, our objective should be to strengthen our curricula by requiring at least a minimal proficiency in foreign languages and cultures, some basic knowledge in international business, especially about export markets, and trade regulations. This kind of educational background will give our students a global perspective that will enable them to better deal with the increasingly complex international issues. Jim Silvester, professor of history and international studies, said that "global education is essential as a means to prepare students to live in 'the global village' of the twenty-first century."[19]

"My country is not yesterday," said Romain Rolland, "my country is tomorrow." And it is toward tomorrow that we have to turn all our efforts by presently instituting curricula that will be responsive to the needs and aspirations of a world society. Only in doing so, we will win the respect of other nations and steer American enterprises through "the dangerous and uncharted international water that lie ahead." [20]

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